

# **Categorical Exclusion**

**Prepared by**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**

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# **Chapter 1. PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD**

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DOI-BLM-AKF010-2013-0016-CX

**BLM Office:Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management**

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907-474-2200

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** FF096587, 2984.01 (AK012)

**Proposed Action Title/Type:**Arctic Fox control to increase recruitment in threatened Steller's eiders near Barrow, Alaska

**Description of Proposed Action:**

The applicant, David Safine with the Endangered Species Branch of the Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), has requested authorization for access on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). The proposed action is to take, capture, mark, or collar wildlife for Arctic fox control to increase recruitment in threatened Steller's eiders near Barrow, Alaska. Partners in the project are USFWS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Barrow Arctic Science Consortium, and the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management. The management objective of the project is to increase nest (and possibly brood) success for Steller's eiders by reducing the number of foxes in the nesting area near Barrow. The Steller's eider is a migratory bird, which is listed as threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

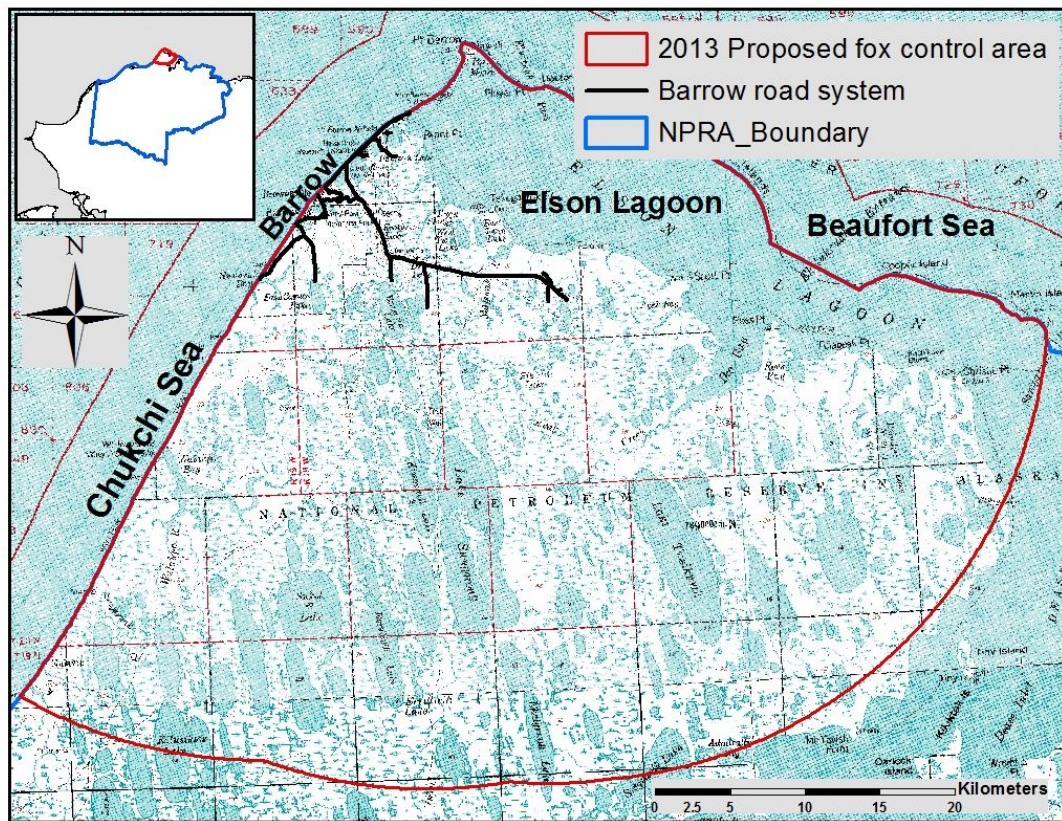
An intra-service endangered species consultation (with USFWS) was conducted by the applicant and they have been issued a Biological Opinion for the effects of this project in the area near Barrow. However, because they are expanding the fox control area in 2013 to a larger area outside of Barrow, they will need to conduct an additional intra-service consultation and get an amended Biological Opinion to cover this expansion of the area. Any work that may be conducted on BLM lands should occur prior to the arrival of eiders, and thus effects of this expanded trapping effort on listed eiders would be unlikely. Potential trapping on any BLM lands would be completed by approximately May 30. The dates of the proposed project are May 1 to July 31, 2013.

Animals would be taken or captured within 20 miles of the road system network near Barrow, Alaska (Figure 1). The following control methods may be employed: leg-hold traps, cage traps, conibear traps, collarum neck snares, conventional snares, firearms, and possibly others. Dead foxes would be donated to the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management to be used in a collaborative project studying rabies with the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

While conditions allow, snow machines would be used for the project. Once snow machines are not an option, staff will use either highway vehicles or all-terrain vehicles on the Barrow road system. Staff would park at pullouts on the road, and access trapping area by foot. During this time they are not anticipating utilizing BLM managed lands. Staff would stay in the city of Barrow so there would be no camping or fuel use on BLM managed lands.

USFWS has conducted this type of activity since 2005 although this is the first year BLM managed lands have been included in the project. The community of Barrow is apprised of

USFWS's activities each year through public presentations at the USFWS Barrow Field Office and at BLM NPR-A SAP meeting. USFWS has consulted with the North Slope Borough, Ukeagvik Inupiat Corporation, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



**Figure 1.1. Applicant Map of the proposed control area near Barrow, Alaska**

#### **Location of Proposed Action:**

**Table 1: Legal Description: (All Umiat Meridian)**

Township	Range	BLM Managed Sections	
24 North	17 West		No BLM Lands
23 North	15 West	30-32	
23 North	16 West		No BLM Lands
23 North	17 West		No BLM Lands
23 North	18 West	No Available BLM Lands	
22 North	13 West	31	
22 North	14 West	19,20,25-30,36	
22 North	15 West	5,8,25,32,33	
22 North	16 West		No BLM Lands
22 North	17 West		No BLM Lands
22 North	18 West	6	Excluding Private Lands
22 North	19 West		No BLM Lands
21 North	13 West	5,6,8,10,11,13	
21 North	14 West	6-9,15-23,28-35	Excluding Private Lands
21 North	15 West	1-36	
21 North	16 West	13, 24-26, 35, 36	

21 North	17 West		No BLM Lands
21 North	18 West		No BLM Lands
21 North	19 West		No BLM Lands
21 North	20 West		No BLM Lands
20 North	14 West	3-10,15-22,27-33	Excluding Private Lands
20 North	15 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
20 North	16 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
20 North	17 West	13-16,21-28,33-36	
20 North	18 West		No BLM Lands
20 North	19 West		No BLM Lands
20 North	20 West		No BLM Lands
20 North	21 West	36	
19 North	14 West	6-9,16,17,20,21,29,31,32,36	
19 North	15 West	1-24,27-30,33,34,36	Excluding Private Lands
19 North	16 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
19 North	17 West	1-36	
19 North	18 West		No BLM Lands
19 North	19 West		No BLM Lands
19 North	20 West		No BLM Lands
19 North	21 West	1,2,10-15,21-29,31-36	
18 North	16 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
18 North	17 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
18 North	18 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
18 North	19 West	1-36	

## Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is in conformance with the following planning document: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) dated November 2012 and associated Record of Decision dated February 2013.

The proposed action is in conformance with the IAP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following IAP decision (including objectives, terms, and conditions): The stipulations and best management practices will regulate permitted activities to meet resource and use objectives and thereby mitigate impacts of those activities.

The proposed action is consistent with the purposes of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976.

The applicant would be provided with stipulations entitled “FF096587 Fairbanks Endangered Species Branch USFWS 2013 Permit Stipulations”.

\_\_\_\_\_, Date March 22, 2013

/s/Donna L. Wixon

Natural Resource Specialist, Arctic Field Office

## Part II: Compliance with NEPA:

This proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4 (F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

**“Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities.”**

The proposed action has been reviewed to determine if any extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.210 and 46.215, apply.

<b>Extraordinary Circumstances</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		X
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X

Date March 22, 2013

/s/Donna L. Wixon  
Natural Resource Specialist, Arctic Field Office